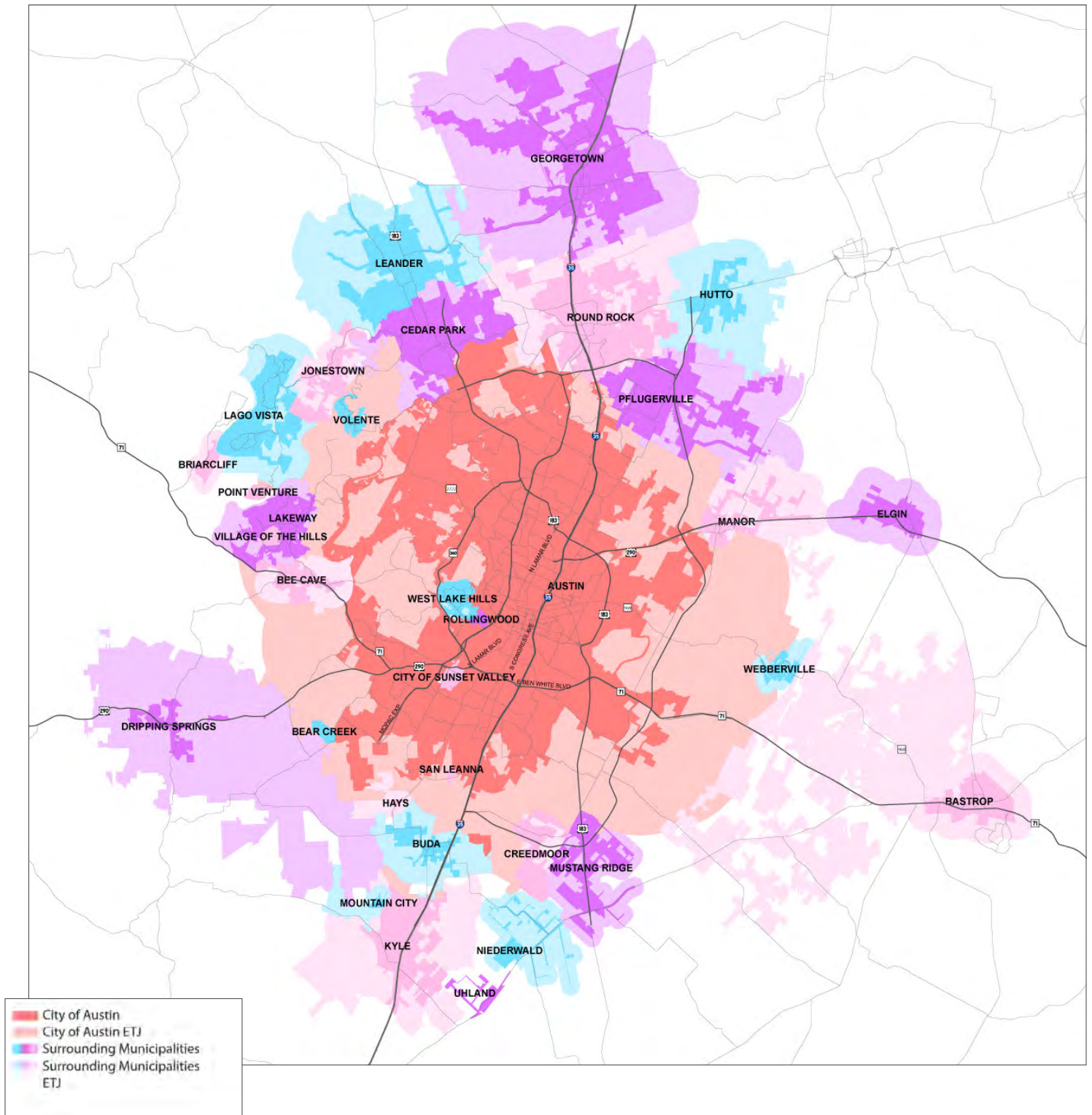
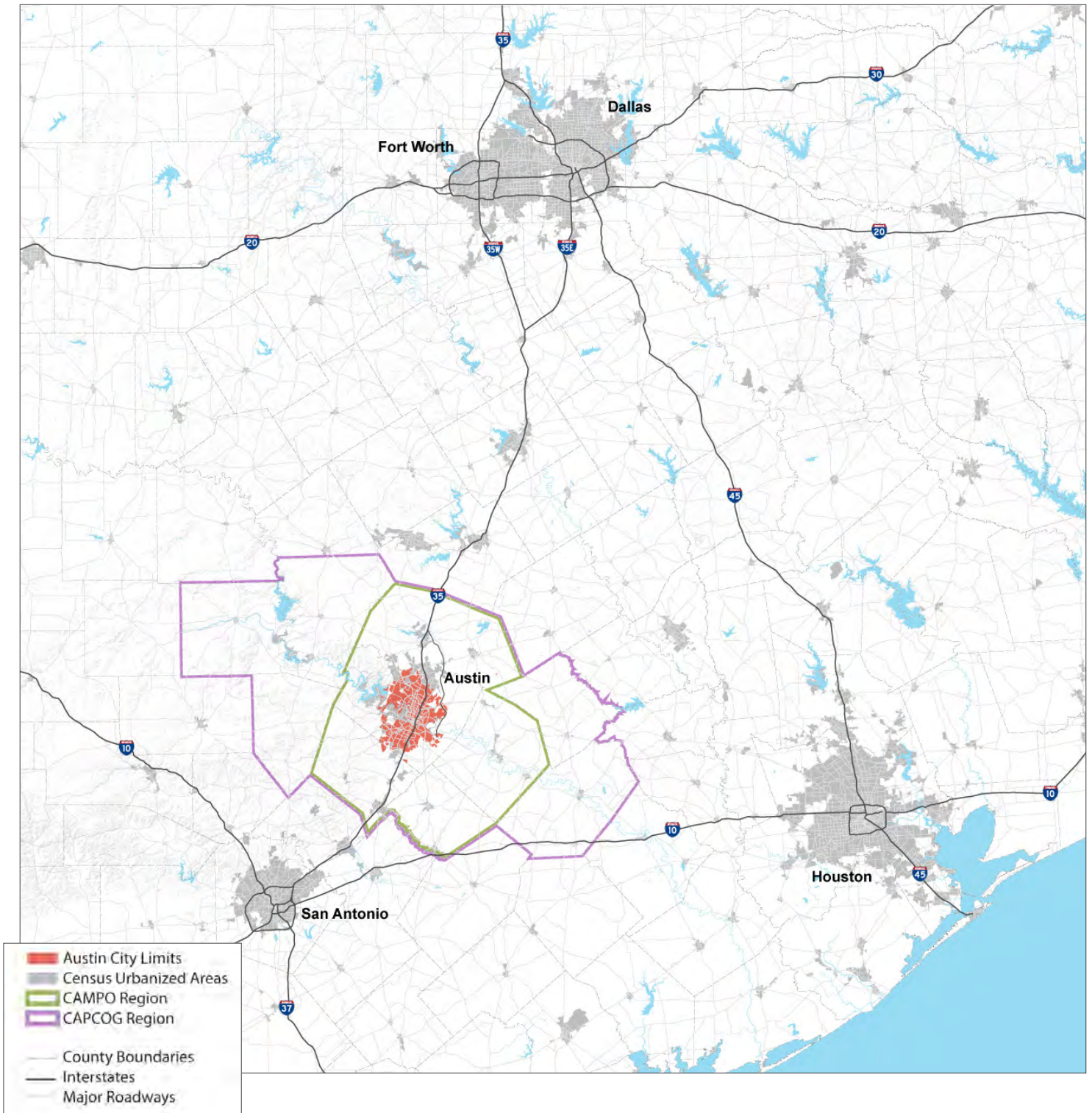


Figure 2.8 Surrounding Jurisdictions



Austin's ability to grow much beyond the boundaries of its current extraterritorial jurisdiction will be limited by the municipal and extraterritorial jurisdiction local boundaries of surrounding cities. Developing new tools and further developing partnerships with Travis County and other local governments as well as the private sector will be crucial to guiding growth in the unincorporated areas surrounding Austin.

Figure 2.9 Austin's Location within the Region (Texas Triangle)



The comprehensive plan includes a regional component developed through coordination with surrounding county and municipal jurisdictions, the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization [CAMPO], and the Capital Area Council of Governments [CAPCOG]. For the purposes of the issues identified in this section, the "region" includes Travis, Hays, Caldwell, Williamson, Bastrop, and Burnet counties, except where noted otherwise. Many of these issues are extensions of those affecting Austin, especially at the edges of our corporate boundary and in the extraterritorial jurisdiction.





Dancers transform an intersection into a stage during Viva! Streets, which closed a section of Sixth Street to motor vehicles for several hours on a Sunday. People used the street to walk, bicycle, play games, and have fun.

## **IMAGINING AUSTIN: OUR VISION OF A COMPLETE COMMUNITY**

**Imagine Austin Vision Statement**

**We Will Become a City of Complete Communities**







Children and parents enjoy a sunny day at a playground in the Mueller neighborhood.



# 3

CHAPTER

## IMAGINING AUSTIN: OUR VISION OF A COMPLETE COMMUNITY

For many years, our community vision has been “to be the most livable city in the country.” However, defining “livability” is difficult and a simple statement cannot sum up all that we are or could be. Austin is a big city and is growing larger and more complex. When we imagine our future, our vision must be more detailed, comprehensive, and reflect this complexity. We can begin by saying “the most livable,” but it’s only a first step. Our new community vision must point toward the complete city we want to become.

### IMAGINE AUSTIN VISION STATEMENT

The process to develop a new vision for Austin engaged thousands of residents over a nine-month period beginning with the kickoff of the *Imagine Austin* planning process in October 2009. Through community forums, social media, surveys, focus groups, small meetings between neighbors and friends, and special events, residents described their ideas for the city’s bicentennial in 2039.

The Comprehensive Plan Citizens Advisory Task Force, appointed by City Council to help guide and champion the process, worked directly from the public input to develop a draft vision statement. The public reviewed and rated each vision component and the revised vision was further reviewed and recommended by the Planning Commission and endorsed by City Council. More details about these meetings and the entire planning process can be found in Appendix B and online.

The *Imagine Austin* vision statement embodies our commitment to preserving the best of Austin and changing those things that need to be changed. The vision statement answers the question, “What sort of city do we want Austin to be?” with a series of principles that address the physical and social evolution of the city and the overall well-being of its residents. The importance of Austin’s people lies at the heart of the vision statement. It acknowledges that the city is a place for people and that inclusion and community leadership will be critical to realizing our long-term goals.

The importance of Austin’s people lies at the heart of the vision statement.

## A Vision for Austin's Future

As it approaches its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Austin is a beacon of sustainability, social equity, and economic opportunity; where diversity and creativity are celebrated; where community needs and values are recognized; where leadership comes from its citizens, and where the necessities of life are affordable and accessible to all.

Austin's greatest asset is its people: passionate about our city, committed to its improvement, and determined to see this vision become a reality.









# LIVABLE



## AUSTIN IS LIVABLE

One of Austin's foundations is its safe, well-maintained, stable, and attractive neighborhoods and places whose character and history are preserved. Economically mixed and diverse neighborhoods across all parts of the city have a range of affordable housing options. All residents have a variety of urban, suburban, and semi-rural lifestyle choices with access to quality schools, libraries, parks and recreation, health and human services, and other outstanding public facilities and services.

- Development occurs in connected and pedestrian-friendly patterns supporting transit and urban lifestyles and reducing sprawl, while protecting and enhancing neighborhoods.
- Downtown offers a safe, vibrant, day- and night-time urban lifestyle for residents, workers, and visitors.
- Development occurs across the city in a manner friendly to families with children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities.
- Austin's unique character and local businesses are recognized as a vital part of our community.
- Clear guidelines support both quality development and preservation that sustain and improve Austin's character and provide certainty for residents and the business community.
- Austin's diverse population is active and healthy, with access to locally-grown, nourishing foods and affordable healthcare.



# NATURAL



## AUSTIN IS NATURAL AND SUSTAINABLE

Austin is a green city. We are environmentally aware and ensure the long-term health and quality of our community through responsible resource use as citizens at the local, regional, and global level. Growth and infrastructure systems are well-managed to respect the limitations of our natural resources.

- We enjoy an accessible, well-maintained network of parks throughout our city.
- We protect the beauty of the Colorado River watershed, Hill Country, and Blackland Prairie and value our farmland, critical to local food production.
- Our open spaces and preserves shape city planning, reduce infrastructure costs, and provide us with recreation, clean air and water, local food, cooler temperatures, and biodiversity.
- We conserve water, energy, soil, and other valuable resources.
- Austin is a leader in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- We use and inspire new technologies that create more sustainable communities, while reducing our dependence on environmentally costly practices.



## AUSTIN IS CREATIVE

Creativity is the engine of Austin's prosperity. Arts, culture, and creativity are essential keys to the city's unique and distinctive identity and are valued as vital contributors to our community's character, quality of life, and economy.

- As a community that continues to stimulate innovation, Austin is a magnet that draws and retains talented and creative individuals.
- Our creative efforts reflect, engage with, and appeal to the ethnic, gender, and age diversity of Austin, and to all socioeconomic levels.
- Residents and visitors participate fully in arts and cultural activities because the opportunities are valued, visible, and accessible.
- Our buildings and places reflect the inspirational and creative spirit of who we are as Austinites, through design excellence, public art, and beautiful, accessible public spaces.



# EDUCATED



## AUSTIN IS EDUCATED

Education is the hope for Austin's future. Austin provides everyone with an equal opportunity for the highest quality of education that allows them to fully develop their potential. Networks of community partnerships support our schools and ensure that our children receive the resources and services they need to thrive and learn.

- Our school campuses provide safe and stable environments enabling future success.
- Neighborhood schools and libraries serve as centers for community collaboration, recreational, and social events, as well as educational and learning opportunities.
- In partnership with private entities and the broader community, institutions of higher education continue to be incubators for innovation in the cultural arts, medicine, industry, business, and technology.
- Every child in Austin has the chance to engage with other cultures, communities, and languages, providing pathways for healthy development and the critical thinking skills students need as future citizens of Austin and the world.



## AUSTIN IS MOBILE AND INTERCONNECTED

Austin is accessible. Our transportation network provides a wide variety of options that are efficient, reliable, and cost-effective to serve the diverse needs and capabilities of our citizens. Public and private sectors work together to improve our air quality and reduce congestion in a collaborative and creative manner.

- Interconnected development patterns support public transit and a variety of transportation choices, while reducing sprawl, congestion, travel times, and negative impacts on existing neighborhoods.
- Our integrated transportation system is well-maintained, minimizes negative impacts on natural resources, and remains affordable for all users.
- Austin promotes safe bicycle and pedestrian access with well-designed routes that provide connectivity throughout the greater Austin area. These routes are part of our comprehensive regional transportation network.

# MOBILE





## AUSTIN IS PROSPEROUS

Austin's prosperity exists because of the overall health, vitality, and sustainability of the city as a whole — including the skills, hard work, and qualities of our citizens, the stewardship of our natural resources, and developing conditions that foster both local businesses and large institutions. Development carefully balances the needs of differing land uses with improved transportation to ensure that growth is both fiscally sound and environmentally sustainable.

- Our economy is resilient and responsive to global trends, thanks to its diverse and thriving mix of local entrepreneurs, large and small businesses, educational institutions, government, and industries.
- Innovation and creativity are the engines of Austin's economy in the arts, research and development, and technology.
- Our ecology is integrated with our economy — the preservation of the environment and natural resources contribute to our prosperity.
- Equitable opportunities are accessible to all through quality education, training, and good jobs.



## AUSTIN VALUES AND RESPECTS ITS PEOPLE

Austin is its people. Our city is home to engaged, compassionate, creative, and independent thinking people, where diversity is a source of strength, and where we have the opportunity to fully participate and fulfill our potential.

- Austin government is transparent and accountable.
- People across all parts of the city and of all ages and income levels live in safe, stable neighborhoods with a variety of affordable and accessible homes with access to healthy food, economic opportunity, healthcare, education, and transportation.
- We stand together for equal rights for all persons, especially acknowledging those who have been denied full participation in the opportunities offered by our community in the past.
- The history of the people of the Austin area is preserved and protected for future generations.

Each level of our complete communities... will be livable, safe, and affordable; promote physical activity, community engagement, and inclusion; ensure that amenities and services are easily accessible to all; and contribute to Austin's unique community spirit.

## WE WILL BECOME A CITY OF COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

To successfully realize *Imagine Austin*, all of our residents must benefit from its outcomes.

To help fulfill the vision statement, the comprehensive plan points us toward becoming a city of complete communities throughout Austin. Such communities are defined by amenities, transportation, services, and opportunities that fulfill all Austinites' material, social, and economic needs. They achieve these outcomes while protecting our important environmental resources and preserving our identity, culture, and sense of place. A complete community provides access to employment, shopping, learning, open space, recreation, and other amenities and services. Establishing complete communities will require monitoring different services at different scales. Some needs, like parks and healthy food, should be within or near every neighborhood. Others, like hospitals, will draw from many neighborhoods.

These communities will be for Austinites of all ages. They will provide environments that support children at every stage of their development, young adults beginning their professional lives and families, and seniors aging gracefully in the neighborhoods where they raised their families. These places will be safe and affordable; promote physical activity, community engagement, and inclusion; make amenities and services easily accessible to everybody; and contribute to Austin's unique community spirit.







The West Campus neighborhood is an emerging complete community which includes a mixture of residences, restaurants, and businesses, including small grocery stores. Wide sidewalks, bike lanes, street benches, and trees encourage walking and bicycling.



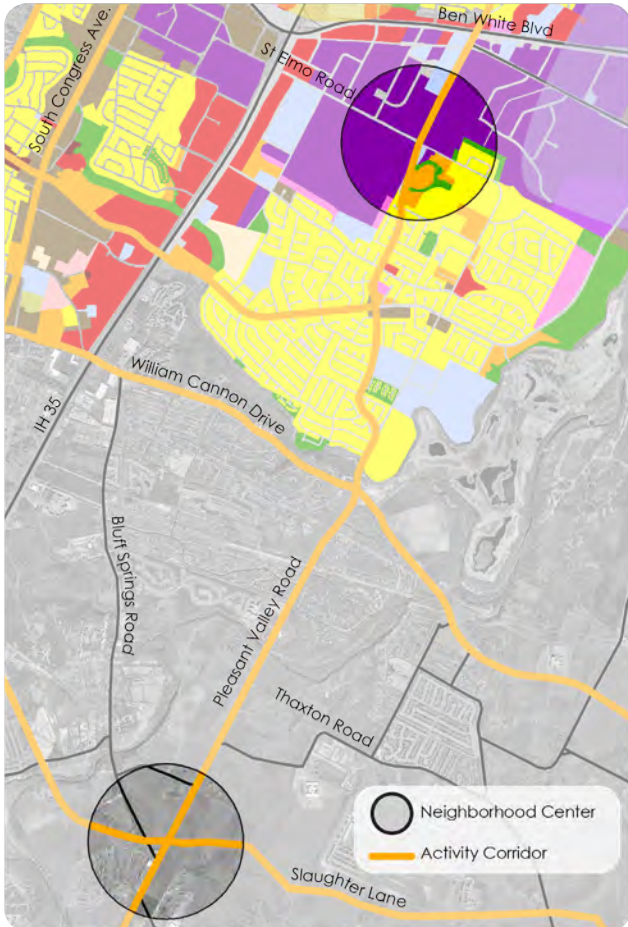
# COMPLETING COMMUNITIES IN PRACTICE

## Dove Springs

Imagine a large neighborhood of approximately 50,000 people. Once full of middle-class families, it is now troubled by poverty, school overcrowding and violence, isolation from the rest of the city, crime, lack of access to health care services, and the highest rate of childhood obesity in the city. Despite this, residents are devoted to the neighborhood where they raise their families, with its affordable homes, proximity to jobs, schools, a recreation center, and a library. Schools and community-based organizations have mobilized to support residents' expressed needs and interests. By fulfilling these identified needs, the community is moving closer to completion.







The *Imagine Austin* Growth Concept Map and Southeast Combined Neighborhood Plan work together to guide how and where development should occur. New neighborhood centers are identified by *Imagine Austin* at the north and south ends of the neighborhood. Through a plan amendment or plan update, initial parcels for these centers will need to be identified on the Future Land Use Map of the neighborhood plan.

Not every new or needed service can be located at these centers. Updates to the neighborhood plan should also identify other opportunity sites, as well as infrastructure needs to support them.

### A Community Speaks

On December 15, 2011, Dove Springs residents assembled to identify what their community needed to turn around and become successful. Six priorities emerged:

1) Address safety issues in the following order:

- a) Violence
- b) Theft
- c) Gang Activity
- d) Vandalism
- e) Speeding
- f) Code Enforcement

2) A comprehensive health facility, centrally located within the neighborhood.

3) In order of priority, build the following schools: a high school, another middle school, another elementary school, and a community college in the community.

4) Additional retail and community services

5) Another library and recreation center

6) Improved public transportation service







## **SHAPING AUSTIN: BUILDING THE COMPLETE COMMUNITY**

**A Framework for the Future**

**Growth Concept Map**

**Comprehensive Plan Building Blocks**

**Building Block 1: Land Use and Transportation**

**Building Block 2: Housing and Neighborhoods**

**Building Block 3: Economy**

**Building Block 4: Conservation and Environment**

**Building Block 5: City Facilities and Services**

**Building Block 6: Society**

**Building Block 7: Creativity**







Complete communities are pedestrian-scaled and provide facilities and services to meet people's everyday needs and wants, including schools, community facilities, parks, a variety of housing, and places to work and shop.



# 4

## CHAPTER

## SHAPING AUSTIN: BUILDING THE COMPLETE COMMUNITY

### A FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE

Achieving the goal of complete communities across Austin requires more than a vision statement. While the vision describes the type of place Austin should become as it approaches its bicentennial, it does not identify the steps to make it happen. The framework for realizing the vision is contained in the Growth Concept Map and building blocks.

- **Growth Concept Map.** The Growth Concept Map (Figure 4.5) applies the *Imagine Austin* vision statement to the city's physical development. Generated through a public scenario-building process, it defines how we plan to accommodate new residents, jobs, mixed use areas, open space, and transportation infrastructure over the next 30 years.
- **Building Blocks.** The building blocks contain broad-ranging policies to guide implementation of the vision (see Appendix A).

BUILDING BLOCK	ELEMENT
1. LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION	Land Use* Transportation* Urban Design Historic Preservation
2. HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS	Housing* Neighborhoods
3. ECONOMY	Economy*
4. CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENT	Conservation & Environment*
5. CITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES	Wastewater, Potable Water, and Drainage* Solid Waste* Energy* Public Safety* Public Building* Recreation and Open Space*
6. SOCIETY	Health and Human Services* Children, Families, and Education
7. CREATIVITY	Creativity

\* Required by City Charter; in some cases, Charter elements have been reorganized

Developed with extensive public involvement, the Growth Concept Map series depicts how Austin should accommodate new residents, jobs, mixed-use developments, open space, and transportation infrastructure over the next 30 years.

### GROWTH CONCEPT MAP

The vision statement sets forth guidance for the city's growth and development for the next 30 years. The growth concept is illustrated by a series of maps. The Growth Concept Map (Figure 4.5) applies the vision statement to show how the city should evolve over the next several decades. It is informed by existing development patterns, planned projects, and small-area plans, as well as environmental features (Figure 4.1), and existing and planned transportation networks (Figures 4.2 through 4.4).

Developed through an extensive public involvement process, the Growth Concept Map illustrates the desired manner to accommodate new residents, jobs, open space, and transportation infrastructure over the next 30 years. During a series of public meetings, more than 450 participants created more than 60 maps illustrating where Austin's growth should go over the next three decades. City staff, consultants, and the Citizen's Advisory Task Force reviewed the maps for common patterns, synthesized them into four distinct scenarios, and developed a "trend" scenario map for comparison.

The five scenarios were measured using "sustainability indicators" developed from the vision statement. These indicators included such measures as the acres of land developed, greenhouse gas emissions, the cost of public infrastructure, average travel times, and percentage of housing near transit stops for each of the scenarios. Through the next round of public meetings and surveys, the public rated each of the scenarios using the indicator results. Public input was solicited through community events, newspaper surveys, door-to-door outreach, newsletters, social media, business and organizational meetings, and one-on-one conversations.

A growth scenario was created using public input, planned developments, and existing neighborhood plans to illustrate how Austin should grow through 2039. The scenario was further tested and refined into the Growth Concept Map (Figure 4.5). More detail on the public process used to create the scenarios and Growth Concept Map is included in Appendix B.

The Growth Concept Map series embodies the *Imagine Austin* vision statement and represents where the City will focus future investments to support activity centers and corridors, and an expanded transportation system.

#### The Growth Concept Map:

- Promotes a compact and connected city
- Promotes infill and redevelopment as opposed to typical low-density "greenfield" development
- Focuses new development in activity corridors and centers accessible by walking, bicycling, and transit as well as by car
- Provides convenient access to jobs and employment centers



- Protects existing open space and natural resources such as creeks, rivers, lakes, and floodplains
- Directs growth away from the Barton Springs Zone of the Edwards Aquifer recharge and contributing zones and other water-supply watersheds
- Improves air quality and reduces greenhouse gas emissions
- Expands the transit network and increases transit use
- Reduces vehicle miles traveled
- Reduces per capita water consumption
- Provides parks and open space close to where people live, work, and play

### Growth Concept Map Series

The Growth Concept Map series consists of five maps setting out key environmental features, transportation connections, and growth patterns (pages 99-103).

#### Figure 4.1 Environmental Resources

Our vision for Austin is a “green” city — a place that is environmentally aware, improves the health of our residents, and protects the region’s vast environmental resources. The Environmental Resource map (Figure 4.1) illustrates the existing network of parks, preserves, and other open spaces, as well as environmentally sensitive water resources such as waterways, springs, floodplains, and the recharging/contributing zones of the Edwards Aquifer. The environmental features illustrated by Figure 4.1, in addition to species habitat, tree canopy, and agricultural resources (Figures 4.8-4.10, pages 153-155), are key environmental resources in Austin. These diverse elements provide multiple benefits, including protection of natural resources and enhanced recreation and transportation options.

Environmentally sensitive features, in addition to existing development patterns and roadways, help to shape and inform the location of the activity centers and corridors illustrated by the Growth Concept Map. By promoting a compact and connected city, Austin seeks to direct development away from sensitive environmental resources, protect existing open space and natural resources, and improve air and water quality.

### GROWTH CONCEPT MAP SERIES

The Growth Concept Map series and the activity centers and corridors are conceptual and provide direction for future growth; however, they are not parcel-specific, nor do they carry the legal weight of zoning designations or other land use regulations. Per state law, a comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries.

#### Figure 4.2 Bicycle and Pedestrian Networks

To realize Austin’s vision, new development and redevelopment must occur in a connected and pedestrian-friendly pattern. Activity centers and corridors illustrated on the Growth Concept Map are pedestrian-friendly, walkable, and bikable areas. By improving bicycle and pedestrian networks, the City of Austin can address many of the challenges facing Austin, including motor vehicle congestion, commute times, air quality, transportation costs, lack of connectivity, bicycle safety, and recreational access.

Figure 4.2 illustrates major urban trails that connect activity centers. Urban trails serve recreation and transportation functions, including biking and hiking, and also provide important environmental benefits by creating open space linkages and expanding the City of Austin’s green infrastructure network. While not included on Figure 4.2, the pedestrian sidewalk network is also essential to accessibility. Austin is continuing to expand the sidewalk network and eliminate gaps to improve walkability throughout Austin.

#### Figure 4.3 Transit Networks

To achieve our vision for Austin, the city’s activity centers and corridors need to support, and be supported by, an expanded transit network that is efficient, reliable, and cost-effective. The transit network will help to reduce sprawl, decrease congestion and vehicle miles traveled, improve air quality, promote infill and redevelopment, and reduce household transportation costs. Several agencies have been working together to plan and develop rail and high-capacity bus lines that will provide greater transportation options and impact where people and businesses choose to locate. The transit network is designed to improve connectedness and better link centers and corridors. Where final locations have not been determined, transit stops are identified as “proposed.” As more detailed planning occurs, these may move. When this happens, the associated activity center should move as well.

#### Figure 4.4 Roadway Networks

While *Imagine Austin* envisions a long-term shift toward transit, walking, and biking, an expanded and improved roadway network is also important. Figure 4.4 identifies major roadway improvements, from developing a complete arterial network to managed or express lanes on Loop 1 and Interstate 35.

#### Figure 4.5 Growth Concept Map

The final map in the Growth Concept Map series ties the previous four together, illustrating how Austin in the future should coordinate transportation features — roads, transit, and urban trails — with activity centers and corridors, in such a way as to reduce degradation of Austin’s environmental resources. The Growth Concept Map was also compared to and adjusted for consistency with the Future Land Use Maps in the adopted neighborhood plans. This map is followed by detailed definition of its features.



Figure 4.1 Environmental Resources

